

Statement was read at a Rally in Philadelphia, Pa

October 27, 2009

PHILADELPHIA, PA— Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) praised The Sierra Club in a statement today for its past work and for today's rally in front of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mid-Atlantic office in Philadelphia. The statement expressed his support for the advancement of climate change legislation.

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"Let me first thank the Sierra Club for all its hard work to fight for clean air and reduce global warming. Their members and staff have been strong partners in advocating and bringing about real positive change. I would like to highlight local members Jeanette C. MacNeille and Robin Mann and members of the local office, who regularly provided important and timely input and assistance during the process of passing climate change legislation in the House.

"But, as this event demonstrates, the fight is not over. The Senate must follow suit and pass climate change legislation, and do so quickly. And we must keep speaking with clear and loud voices of the need for meaningful legislation that does not compromise away our health and safety.

"In June, I signed a letter to House leadership, during the heat of the House debate, calling for the final bill to maintain or strengthen existing Clean Air Act authority to curtail global warming emissions from coal plants, along with calling for increasing the Renewable Energy Standard, and reducing the allocations going to users of fossil fuels. Later that month, as you know, the House passed its bill, and while the bill was not perfect, I believe it provides a strong step in the right direction and maintains an opportunity for improvement in the future.

Since passage in the House, I have called my colleagues in the Senate to move quickly and pass meaningful climate change legislation. And at the same time, I continue to push for final legislation that protects our health and environment, weans our country off of foreign oil, creates millions of new clean energy jobs, saves consumers in energy costs, and restores this nation's global leadership role in efforts to reduce emissions. Doing so is an imperative.

"So I commend the efforts of those gathered here today and look forward to continuing to work with you to get this hard, but very important, job done."

Congressman Sestak has maintained that retaining EPA enforcement ability under the Clean Air Act is an important part of passing meaningful climate change legislation. In 2007, the landmark Supreme Court case, *Massachusetts vs. EPA*, gave the EPA the legal right to regulate greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄), which contribute to global warming, under the provisions of the Clean Air Act.

The Clean Air Act (CAA) was signed into law in 1970 and resulted in a major shift in the federal government's role in air pollution control. The CAA brought a comprehensive state and federal response to the problem of emissions from stationary (i.e. industrial) and mobile (i.e. motor vehicle) sources, in order to address the increasing health problems that were resulting from air pollution in the United States. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments further strengthened the original Clean Air Act and the EPA's ability to regulate air-borne pollutants. A report released by the National Academy of Sciences on October 19 was able to quantify the primarily health damages from air pollution that were associated with electricity generation and motor vehicle transportation in 2005 at an estimated \$120 billion in the U.S. A study by the EPA for Congress predicts that the CAA will prevent 23,000 Americans from dying prematurely and avert over 1,700,000 instances of asthma attacks and aggravation of chronic and acute bronchitis, as well as 4.1 million lost work days, in 2010 alone. Passing legislation to manage greenhouse gas

emissions is an important next step in allowing America to protect the health and safety of its citizens from air-borne pollutants.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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